

NSC BRIEFING

27 June 1955

INDOCHINA

- I. In Vietnam Diem still unwilling to commit his government on question of consultations on nation-wide elections.
 - A. Farthest he has gone is to say "possibility not excluded;" he sees exchange of written communications with Viet Minh through third party as possible means of meeting Geneva requirements.
 - B. Still insists first priority is new military agreement with France, but negotiations on this stalled on disagreement over title to be given new French envoy, Henri Hoppenot.
 - C. Meanwhile, according to General Guillaume French troop strength down to 55,000 (20,000 below what had been planned by 1 July)
- II. Communist propaganda offensive on Vietnam election consultations stepped up as 20 July nears (date set at Geneva for consultations to begin.)
 - A. Chou En-lai chimed in with Ho Chi Minh on latter's visit to Peiping; Both charged US trying to prevent "peaceful unification."
 - B. They endorsed Nehru-Bulganin statement urging fulfillment of Geneva agreement.
 - C. More of same likely when Ho reaches Moscow.
- III. In Laos government plans resume negotiations with Pathet Lao shortly, mainly to satisfy new Indian chairman of International Commission.

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- A. Indian wishes fair test of talks, says he will join Canadian in referring problem to Geneva powers if no progress achieved by end July.
 - B. Talks expected to be inconclusive, as Pathet Lao have no desire settle issue of northern provinces now and are expected to make impossible demands of government.
 - C. Time thus gained by Pathet Lao being put to good use in strengthening hold in north, aided by substantial Viet Minh military aid program.
- IV. In Cambodia, hottest question is status of US military aid agreement.
- A. Behind-the-scenes struggle going on in International Commission there, which "informally" views agreement as contravening Geneva accords.
 - B. Key to Commission's final decision and action is Indian chairman, who now inclines toward Canadian view that, at most, simple interpretative statement be asked of Cambodia.
 - C. New Delhi, however, is known to oppose American military aid on general principles, and could be swayed by recent strong note from Chou En-lai denouncing agreement.